

Master's Thesis Abstract

THE GREAT LAKES FISHERIES LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE: EVALUATION OF  
AN EXTENSION PROGRAM'S IMPACTS IN RELATION TO REGIONAL SEA  
GRANT AND LOCAL PARTICIPANTS' EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By

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In 2003-04, the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network piloted the Great Lakes Fisheries Leadership Institute (GLFLI), an adult Extension education program. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to describe program activities, impacts, and values from the perspectives of regional GLFLI program organizers and 22 Michigan program participants. This evaluation found that the GLFLI provided program coverage for nearly all identified learning outcomes through training curriculum modules, lakewide, and/or statewide training sessions (or a combination of all three). Motivations for participation included values related to a specific participant cause, increased understanding, and social related opportunities. Program outcomes included networking of diverse fishery stakeholders, as well as knowledge of Great Lakes fisheries history, biology/ecology, management, and related issues. As intended stewardship activities, participants were most likely to carry out educational activities, policy or legislative work, and/or fisheries habitat work, and these actions were most likely to occur at a local geographic or specific fisheries organizational level. Most participants (81.8%) indicated they had learned things beyond what they had originally hoped, and overall, felt their learning experience to be beneficial. Recommendations include maintaining existing programming format that promotes networking of diverse stakeholders and understanding of basic knowledge and understanding relating to Great Lakes fisheries. Advanced training opportunities exist for learners to practice specific skills necessary to carry out leadership actions.